

STORY GAMES

Director's Cut: In this scene, a simple suggestion is given for the story and it begins normally. The "caller" interrupts scenes as they see fit, moving the scene to a new time and/or place with short suggestions (e.g. "later that day," "just seconds earlier," "the worst thing that could have happened at that moment," "other things that make Gary freak out.") and we see the group act out whatever has been called.

Tips: play the unexpected immediately when you cut to a new scene / look for several short things (one liner types) that you can do back to back (in the above example, showing something that would freak Gary out, then another, then another, then going back to the normal scene) / try to bring it all together with a big payoff at the end of the scene—perhaps from something you've mentioned or done from earlier in the game

Suggested ask fors: What is a movie that absolutely does NOT need a sequel? / Could you give me the name of a movie that never existed?

Fairy Tale: One member acts as caller and "reads" a fairy tale that is based on an audience suggestion. The rest of the group acts out the various parts of the fairy tale.

Tips: play characters who are unlike you (e.g. the big guy playing the tiny princess, etc.) / the caller should put the players in "difficult" or "embarrassing" situations that the audience thinks is out there, but that you actually feel comfortable with) / whenever you feel the story isn't paying off, the caller should change gears and have something unexpected happen to change the direction of the story

Suggested ask fors: I need a strange, made up fairy tale character name. And where is he or she? / Give me the title of a mystical-sounding location.

First Line, Last Line: Suggestions are taken for the first line and last line to be said in the scene. The performers must begin with the first line, create a scene and finish with the last line provided.

Tips: Try to use creative, unusual characters to your advantage in this scene / take the scene far away from the last line (story-wise) and bring it back around so it impresses the audience / think about ways you can use the idea of "can't say that line until the end" to your advantage

Suggested ask fors: Could you give me something you wouldn't want to hear from your doctor-lawyer-girlfriend? And now, how about one of your favorite "tried and true expressions?" / What would be something extremely good or extremely bad that you don't hear people say every day? Next, give me a line your mother always used to say.

Forgetful Storyteller: One member tells a story while walking in and out through the audience. The other members of the team play out the scene as directed by the “forgetful storyteller”—unfortunately, they cannot remember all the details and have to be reminded by nearby audience members, who provide suggestions that are immediately incorporated into the scene (e.g. “and Donna the princess was attacked by, by, uh, she was attacked by... (Audience Member: Piglet!) yes, by Piglet! Oh, he looks so adorable, but we all know he’s a trained killer!”).

Tips: incorporate the audience into the performance as props and “set pieces” / use the audience’s ideas very enthusiastically, even if they’re not so strong / make the performers do things they “don’t want to do”

Suggested ask fors: Would you please give me the craziest name you ever heard someone give their pet? Thank you. This will be the tale of Princess _____ . / Could you give me an unlikely place for a futuristic story to take place?

Forward / Reverse: One member of the team calls the scene while two people start a scene based on an audience suggestion. The other members wait off stage, ready to come in to the scene later. The scene proceeds normally until the caller calls out “reverse!” at which point the scene begins to play backwards. It continues to play backwards until the caller calls out “forward!” and we find ourselves seeing the rewind scene playing over again.

Tips: keep this game physical and keep the talking to a minimum / don’t talk over each other so your funny moments are singled out when forwarded and reversed / do physical things that don’t look the same done backwards as they do forwards

Suggested ask fors: I’ll need a place where there’s a sense of danger. / How about a location where there’d be a lot of physical outdoor activity?

Halftime: A suggestion is taken and a scene is played out in about forty seconds. Then we see the same scene played out again, simply edited down so that the whole thing lasts twenty seconds. The third time it is still the same scene, but it is now performed (from beginning to end) in only ten seconds. The fourth time it is done in five seconds and the final time it is performed in about two seconds.

Tips: create a physical scene with some things that simply cannot be done the same once you’re down to just a few seconds / remember the lines you’ve spoken and think about how to shorten them so that gets a laugh by itself / the ending should be something big that will be fun by itself at the end (in the two second version you really only have time to do the ending)

Suggested ask fors: Could you please give me a dangerous hobby? / I'll need a vacation destination.

Pan Left, Pan Right: One member of the team calls while the other four stand in a square. The two people standing downstage will perform a scene based on the audience's suggestion for that scene. Then the caller calls out "pan right" and everyone rotates to the next position in the square. After they rotate a new suggestion is given and this process is quickly repeated until all four pairings have a different suggestion. Then the scene begins and we watch whichever group is downstage. That scene continues until the caller calls out either "pan left" or "pan right" at which point everyone goes left or right and we see a different scene. The scenes continue to rotate around as directed by the caller.

Tips: pan right all the way through all four scenes before you start going left and right—we should see all scenes once before anything else happens / the person who is downstage right should lead the scene / the people who are not in the scene should turn away from what's happening so they will still get their left and right correct / when you're not in the scene—think about the scene you could come into next (if you're upstage right and they say "pan right" you're still out, so why worry about that scene yet? think about the "pan left" scene, because if they call that, you're in it right now!

Suggested ask fors: May I have something starting with the letter "C"? / What's something that can fit in the palm of your hand? / Could you give me something you loved when you were a little kid? / What's something you would find in a creepy old attic? / Would you make up the name of a super hero? / Can I have an occupation?

Survivor: A scene suggestion is given and all five performers begin a performance that lasts somewhere around forty seconds. One member of the team is quickly eliminated and the four remaining members must now repeat the scene, playing all five parts. Each time the scene is replayed another member is removed so that three people play all five parts, then two and finally one person is left to play out all five parts, doing the same scene we've watched from the beginning.

Tips: I always recommend you try for three people, one animal and one inanimate object—it provides some opportunities for laughs that I hope you'll find on your own / do NOT play the same part in the second scene that you played in the first / pay attention to what's going on around you so you can play their part in subsequent rounds (much easier said than done)

Suggested ask fors: Where's someplace you wouldn't want to be stranded? / Can I have a remote location?